

## **Travel Demand**

Travel demand is generally reported in the form of average daily traffic counts. Traffic counts are taken regularly at several locations in and around Clayton by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. To estimate future travel demand, traffic trends over the past nineteen years were studied. A comparison of annual growth rates from 1970 to 1989 at various count locations in Clayton shows average annual growth rates ranging from 3.5% to 9.8%.

During the last four years, Clayton has experienced a rapid increase in travel demand. It is hard to predict future travel based on growth spurts like the one Clayton is presently experiencing. Most areas find it difficult to sustain high annual growth rates for long periods of time. However, construction of the proposed US 70 Bypass is expected to produce another travel peak within the next 20 years.

### **Influence of US 70 Bypass**

Situated in a strategic location between Raleigh and Coastal North Carolina, Clayton processes traffic of varying types. Vacationers, commuters and commercial vehicles make up a large portion of the traffic passing through Clayton on US 70. US 70 also handles travel generated by residents and businesses in and around Clayton. Traffic projections along US 70 indicate that there is a need for a bypass of Clayton. The bypass project is already funded in the 1990 - 1996 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Study of the location of the bypass was not included as part of the Thoroughfare Plan since detailed environmental assessments are already underway. Alignments both to the north and south are being considered with interchanges limited to a few locations. The thoroughfare plan will supplement any alignment of the bypass by providing a system of streets that link the proposed interchanges with the radial streets. This eliminates the inconvenience of travel to the downtown area for trips not destined to that area.

With the added convenience of the bypass, commuters will find Clayton a more attractive place to reside. Highway retail businesses and industries will also build along the bypass. All of this development will generate additional traffic which must be safely and efficiently distributed. The existing and expected average traffic volumes based on traffic growth rates varying upwards from 2.5% are shown in Figures 4 and 5.

### **Economy and Employment**

North Carolina's active role in recruiting industry has brought many large employers into the State. Clayton hosts industries such as Cutter Biological, Champion, and KABI, all of which have provided job opportunities and economic stability for the people in and around Clayton. Facilities operated by North Carolina State University and Rhone Poulenc also stand out as major contributors to the economic vitality of the area. These centers specialize in agricultural